

ARGUMENTS

The Office Action mailed on May 2, 2007 has been carefully considered. In the Office Action, Claims 12-18 stand rejected and Claims 19-24, 26-28, 30, 31 and 33 are allowed. The Applicants have amended Claims 12 and 13. The Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the present application in light of the amendments above and the remarks below.

Allowed Claims

In the Office Action, Claims 19-24, 26-28, 30, 31 and 33 are allowed.

Information Disclosure Statement

The Applicants had previously filed an Information Disclosure Statement (IDS) with the USPTO on July 12, 2005. However, it does not appear that in the present Office Action that the references cited in the IDS were considered. Thus, the Applicant hereby requests acknowledgement of the IDS filed July 12, 2005. A copy of the previously filed IDS is submitted herein along with the present Reply.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claim 12 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being allegedly anticipated by US 4,955,654 to Tsuchihashi. The Applicants respectfully traverse and disagree with the rejection.

According to the M.P.E.P., a claim is anticipated under 35 U.S.C. § 102(a), (b) and (e) only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference.

Tsuchihashi discloses an end effector for use in a remote manipulator system for space crafts. The effector is secured to a front end of a manipulator of a remote manipulator system and having a function for clamping dedicated objects, wherein a force (or torque) applied by the end effector to the gripping object at the time the object is detected to be clamped so that a driving portion of the end effector is feedback-controlled in order to protect the end effector applying a force (or torque) exceeding a predetermined level.

However, in contrast to amended Claim 12, Tsuchihashi does not disclose that the peripheral device is engaged with the coupling mechanism of the capture mechanism, wherein the peripheral device is manipulatable by the user. Instead, Tsuchihashi only discloses that the user operates the clamping mechanism, and not the gripping object, to fit the clamping mechanism over the gripping object to thereby grasp the object within the clamping mechanism. It is unclear what the Examiner believes that 'peripheral device' represents in the Tsuchihashi case, but the gripping object and the clamping object cannot both be construed as the 'peripheral device'. Thus, Tsuchihashi does not teach that the gripping object is manipulatable by user in the capture mechanism, as recited in Claim 12.

In addition, Tsuchihashi does not disclose a sensing assembly configured to detect movement of the peripheral device within the apparatus when engaged by the capture mechanism. Instead, Tsuchihashi only discloses that the effector closes its clamping mechanism and uses a force sensor to determine if the gripping object has been adequately clamped. In other words, Tsuchihashi does not teach that there is sensing of the movement of the peripheral device in the capture mechanism when engaged therein, as recited in Claim 12.

Furthermore, Tsuchihashi does not disclose an actuator configured to apply force feedback to the peripheral device when the peripheral device is engaged by the capture

mechanism, wherein the force feedback is felt by the user manipulating the peripheral device, as recited in Claim 12. Again, Tsuchihashi only discloses a feedback system to alert the user that the gripping object has been clamped and sufficient force is applied to move the object in space. Therefore, there is no teaching of an actuator or other device which relays the force feedback to the user operating the peripheral device, wherein the force feedback is actually felt by the user. For at least these reasons, Tsuchihashi does not teach each and every element of limitation of the subject matter claimed in Claim 12. Accordingly, Claim 12 is distinguishable from Tsuchihashi and is in condition for allowance. Applicants respectfully request allowance of Claim 12.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 13-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being allegedly unpatentable over Tsuchihashi in view of US Pat. No. 5,805,140 to Rosenberg et al. The Applicants respectfully traverse. Claims 13-18 are dependent on independent Claim 12. As stated above, Claim 12 is in a condition for allowance. Accordingly, Claims 13-18 are allowable for being dependent on an allowable base claim.

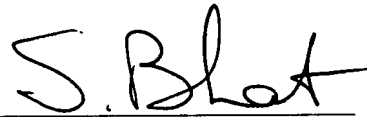
Conclusion

It is believed that the present application is in condition for allowance and early favorable consideration of this reply is earnestly solicited. If, in the opinion of the Examiner, an interview would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at the number indicated below. Applicant respectfully requests that a timely Notice of Allowance be issued in this case. Please charge any additional required fee or credit any overpayment not otherwise paid or credited to our deposit account No. 50-1698.

Respectfully submitted,

Dated:

8/1/07



Suvashis Bhattacharya

Reg. No. 46,554

Thelen Reid Brown
Raysman & Steiner LLP
P.O. Box 640640
San Jose, CA 95164-0640
Tel. (408) 292-5800
Fax. (408) 287-8040